

## Paris Journal 2010

Marseille March 20,

We arrived by TGV in Marseille on Friday afternoon to visit Christian Morel, whom Ernie advised through his dissertation in 1986 at the University of Lausanne, Switzerland. He is from Yverdon, Switzerland. His wife Emmanuel met us and took us by Metro to their home. She is originally from Genève. It is a short walk from the Metro stop past stately buildings to rue Farges where they live. We were visiting them in Marseille three years ago on the day they received the key to their newly purchased apartment. They were thrilled. Two great points were that there was a garden in the courtyard and 2 parking spots. The apartment had high ceilings and it was roomy and bathed in light.

So now we got to see what they did with the basic empty space we saw on that day 3 years ago. Here is a photo of Christian in the spacious and totally modern kitchen. The reflection on the glass cabinet door is a tree from the garden seen through the French door in the dining room. There are French doors also from the living room, which is also quite spacious.



The next is a photo of Ernie on their living room couch. The light in the room is coming from the French doors opening onto the garden.



Emmanuel fixed a fine meal of risotto and boulets (mushrooms), salad and good bread. Christian and Alexanne came in later – both from school - he from the University of Marseille where he teaches and she from where she is working on her baccalaureate.

She is 18 and is preparing to go away for University in the fall. Here is a photo of Alexanne, a winsome, charming young woman. She was born and raised in Switzerland but has been in Marseille for three years and is quickly becoming a French woman, in my estimation. She uses the cute mannerism I have seen in French people of blowing through her lips as an expression of exasperation, as a teenager does to her stuffy parents.



That evening we walked through their neighborhood, past the school where Alexanne used to go, walked along the wide Boulevard near their house called Boulevard de Prado. There is a square with a fountain and a huge statue called Castellane. *[image below from the web]*



They showed us where the outdoor market is each Saturday morning on Prado. While we were out Alexanne did her homework. She was given a paper to fill out with a list of things she wants to accomplish and to do. She was worried about doing it well.

Early in the morning I heard stirrings at the door and got up to look. It was Alexanne leaving at 7:45 a.m. Later at breakfast I asked where she was going so early on a Saturday morning. She was going to school. School is 6 days a week, although Saturday and Wednesday are only half day.

After breakfast we went to the outdoor market that spreads for several blocks on the Prado.



We decided to separate while Christian and Emmanuelle did their shopping. So we wandered off. They gave us a key to the house and I remembered the way we had come. Ernie noticed that prices were much lower than in Paris, at least where we shop. He found some black socks he has been looking for at half the price of some he had seen in Paris.

By this time, I realized that I had left my make up kit on the TGV so I shopped for items to re create it. There were two or three booths of various items of make up. I found a compact with a magnifying mirror and a regular mirror, an eyeliner pencil and a cute little zipper bag to carry it in. Fortunately, I routinely carry lipstick and powder compact in my purse. I decided against replacing the rest since I have duplicates at home.

I was interested in the fish I saw. They were from the Mediterranean and look different than in the fish markets I have seen in Paris. Here are a couple of pictures. Of course, the calamari, on the far right, looks the same.





Here is a different fish vendor. See the photo on display behind the fish.



We wandered around and bought a dozen yellow tulips that were wrapped for us with great care and with additional greenery. I thought the yellow would look good with all the blue in the apartment. They have a light blue motif and everything is quite modern and clean looking.

When we arrived back they had prepared lunch of a rotisserie chicken, bread and salad and a bottle of wine. Alexanne was back from school and joined us.

Then we went off to take a promenade along the sea at la Calanque on the western end of Marseille. Marseille has rocky high land on three sides and the sea on the fourth. The land has a nice curve to it so it is an excellent port city that has been there since the Phoenicians and has been occupied by the Romans and many others.

We drove (without Alexanne) and took a nice walk up a trail. The weather was bright with a slight wind. There were other walkers but at this time of year, there were not the numbers they see during the summer months. Coming back we saw men in wet suits and spears returning with several of the spotted fish seen in the first picture hanging from their belts – dinner?

I had to stop for pictures of the sea crashing against the rocky shore. There was a cute little town, a fishing village, really with a couple of restaurants for the visitors. I didn't manage to catch any photos where the waves were splashing up high. My camera is too slow to catch them at that stage so you'll have to imagine the splash.



On the upper right of the next photo you can make out the trail as it follows the cliff.





On one of the coves there was a boat anchored waiting for divers and we saw several boats motoring out further for SCUBA diving. Christian and Emmanuel said the sea is very picturesque in that area and it is popular diving area.

As we came back I got a picture of the little village with the railroad bridge over it. The train that runs on it is known as The Blue Train, because it is painted blue. Christian told us that in the Gare de Lyon in Paris, from where we took the TGV to Marseille, there is a restaurant called Le Train Bleu. It is named for this particular train. We saw it pass and saw that it is blue.



We drove back. They went out to do their supermarket shopping for frozen goods. They try to get the bulk of their weekly shopping done on Saturdays. We stayed behind.

That evening we took the Metro to the old port part of town for dinner. We walked around and looked at many restaurants on restaurant row. The area had one restaurant after another. The evening was fresh and lovely.

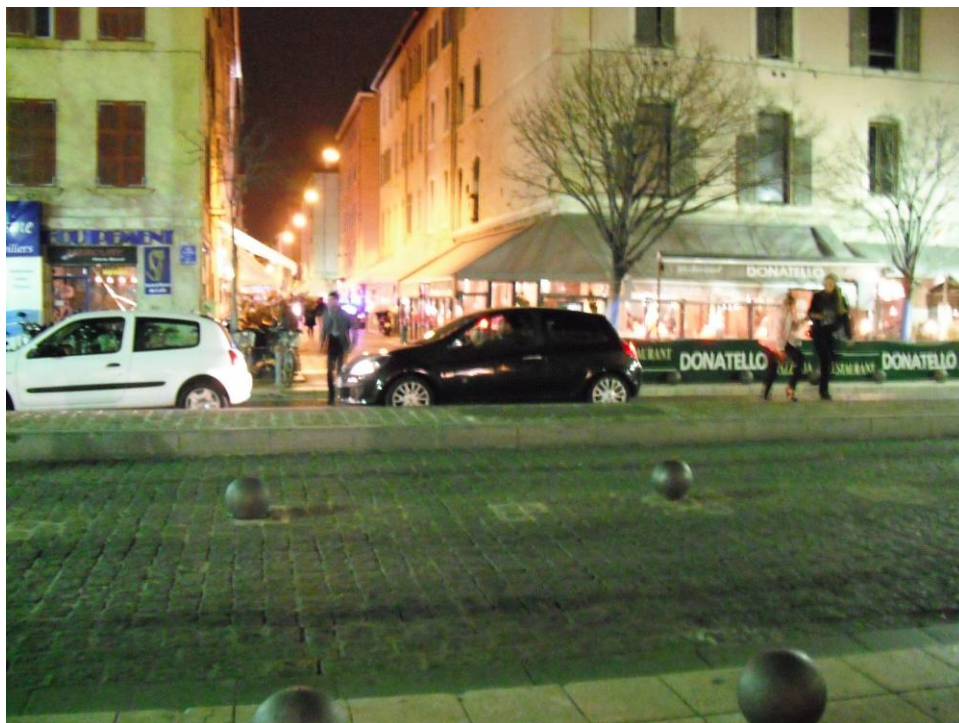
We finally settled on L'Oliveraie and were seated upstairs. I had asked to go to a fish restaurant since we were smack on the Mediterranean. We ended up ordering fish prepared in different ways and a bottle of Viognier and then a second. It was a lovely meal. Christian offered to take us to his laboratory the following morning.

When we came out it was nearly midnight and the streets were jumping with people and music spilling out of establishments. I took two photos and while they are blurred because there wasn't enough light, it is clear that the outdoor restaurant seats are full and there are lots of people milling around.





This is of the restaurant next to ours when we came out. The next photo is from across the street.



It was too late for the Metro so we walked back to the apartment. Marseille is not a large city and their apartment is quite centrally located. The streets felt very safe.

In the morning after breakfast we drove to the tip of the city to a neighborhood called Malmousque and walked through the narrow streets. They were so narrow only the smallest of cars can drive down them so we walked in the middle of the cobblestoned street. I didn't get any photos. Too bad I didn't take my camera because it looked unlike what I had seen in the rest of Marseille. It was like a little village in Toscana or Greece with paint peeling off the wall and geranium boxes perched on second story balconies. *[below are a couple of images from the web]*



The storm that had seemed so threatening at the end of the night didn't materialize but the clouds were still menacing and the wind was blowing hard. The storm didn't hit until we were on the TGV returning. The neighborhood is mostly a vacation place but there seemed to be a few full time residents with signs asking visitors to respect the privacy of the homeowners. Some of the homes were mansions.

In this picturesque region is the Centre d'Océanologie de Marseille.

At the very tip was a rest and recreation resort for the members of the Foreign Legion. Yes, the French Foreign Legion still exists. There were tennis courts, and an outdoor swimming pool, a picnic area. It was right at the edge of the sea. Looked pretty posh to us. (lots of keep out signs)

We came back and had a light lunch; then Christian took us to his laboratory at the University of Marseille. His office and grant are located in CPPM, Centre for particle physics of physique of Marseille. *[first picture below is from the CPPM web page; second picture is by Olivia]*





He is the head of a group and in addition to his teaching responsibilities, he has a large grant to develop a new amalgamation of PET scans and CAT scans. There are two other groups in competition to complete the project first. He has 150 people working on the project and they are building a new facility with a “clean room” to house their prototype. He says he has enough workers to do a thorough job, some good people and adequate resources.

Here is his office, which is pretty spacious. To the right of the coat rack is a small sitting space with a chalkboard.





He took us to the laboratory, which is a high-ceilinged factory flooded with light. He showed us the posters of the “Antares” project that is being run at a very deep point in the ocean taking measurements of cosmic rays. (upward going neutrinos). One of the apparatus was in the factory for repair. It is difficult to visualize from this photo. They are large globes of glass [phototubes] that have instruments in them and they hand down vertically. *[below from the web]*





We returned to their home and sat down for tea. Emmanuel served a cake and I had a very ripe, wonderful pear.

Later they accompanied us to the train station and waited with us until we could get on to say good bye. It was a great, warm visit.

The return trip from Marseille was interesting. The train was 25 minutes late so we arrived about 1 a.m. Metro and buses do not run after midnight so the queue for a taxi was at least 100 people long and wound all the way in front of the Gare. We gasped when we saw the line. About 30 minutes later we were in a cab and saw that the line was still as long. The trains continued to spill people out the entire time we were waiting.

It was a little like a feeding frenzy for the taxis. But as we have observed before, the crowd was polite and orderly. Parisians have a bad reputation that we don't think they deserve. They are even polite (or at least not abusive) to the beggars. There was one working the crowd in the line. He was obviously crazy and louder than most other numerous beggars we have seen in Paris. People just ignored him or said no. One or two gave him a coin. But no one yelled at him or physically pushed him. \

The taxi ride was quick; Gare de Lyon is not far from our apartment so we were home before we knew it.